'misbehaviour' which would have occurred within a period of two years preceding from the commencement of the new Law. Subsequently, after the submission of the Report, Chairman of the Law Commission has written a letter to the Law Minister suggesting that the Government may take a view as to whether the Act should apply prospectively only to future misbehaviour after the commencement of the Act and also to provide a limitation that no complaint should be filed after six months from the occurrence of the act or conduct constituting the misbehaviour. A complaint shall not lie in respect of any act or conduct of any Judge who has demitted his office.

(i) The Judicial Council of five Judges shall consist of the Chief Justice of India, two senior most judges of the Supreme Court and, two senior most Chief Justices of the High Courts.

**Cases pending in High Courts and Supreme Court**

664. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than hundred civil and criminal cases are lying pending in the High Courts and Supreme Court for more than 20-25 years;

(b) if so, the number of such cases pending in each High Court and Supreme Court alongwith the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken/instructions being issued go the courts to finalise the cases at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) and (b) As on 1.11.2007, there were 24 cases pending in the Supreme Court for more than 20 years out of which 15 years were pending for more than 25 years. There are no cases pending for more than 20 years in the High Courts of Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh. There are 112 cases pending for more than 20 years in the High Court of Uttarakhand as on 22.11.2007 and 1121 cases pending in the High Court of Delhi for more than 20 years as on 30.6.2007. Information on the details in respect of the other High Courts and the reasons for their pendency is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) Finalization of the cases in the courts falls within the exclusive domain of the judiciary. Government has, in its efforts to facilitate disposal of cases in the superior courts, *inter alia*, taken the following steps:

(i) agreed to increase the strength of Judges of the High Courts by 152,

(ii) vacancies in the superior courts are filled up expeditiously;

(iii) implementation of a Plan scheme of computerization of the judiciary and upgradation of the computer infrastructure in the Supreme Court and the High Courts.

**Attestation powers to judicial officers**

665. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that judicial officers, including magistrates have been given powers to attest documents and other papers;

(b) if so, the details of judicial officers including magistrates, who have been given powers to attest documents/papers;

(c) whether powers of attestation have been given through Government orders/ notifications; and

(d) if so, the details of Government orders/notifications issued in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

**Issue of Electors' Photo Identity Cards**

666. SHRI MAHMOOD A. MADANI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to issue electors' photo indentity cards round the year;

(b) if so, by when the scheme would be implemented; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) and (b) Electors' Photo Identity Cards (EPIC) is issued either through permanent centres set up in some States/Union Territories, which work round the year or, in case of some States/Union Territories, through special EPIC campaign undertaken by opening Designated Photography Locations (DPLs) for specified periods during a year. In States/ Union Territories having permanent centres, special EPIC campaign may also be undertaken in addition to maximize EPIC coverage.

(c) Does not arise.

**Creation of Special Mining Zones**

667. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to identify mineral rich areas in various States and to give blankets approvals, to develop them as Special Mining Zones (SMZs);

(b) if so, the details in this regard and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether fast allocation of SMZs to prospective captive industries in steel and power sectors would result in higher GDP growth; and

(d) if so, the steps Government proposes to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) and (b) State Governments are the owners of the minerals and grant mineral concessions. Prior approval of the Central Government is mandatory for grant of mineral concession for minerals in the First Schedule to the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957, and the same is conveyed by the Central Government to the State Government after evaluating the merits of the mineral concession proposal on case to case basis.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of the reply given to (a) and (b) above.